

SHEER MISERY AS WYCOMBE CONCEDE FOUR

IT WAS a night of sheer misery for Wycombe Wanderers on Tuesday, when they were hammered by a free-running Walton and Hershham outfit that made a mockery of their mediocre start to the season.

Wycombe, who had a 100 per cent record in the Rothmans Isthmian League until three games ago, have now picked up only one point from their last three matches and they will continue to struggle if Tuesday night's game is anything to go by.

Too many players had their heads down after just one goal and they never looked like staging an effective fight-back. But they had to contend with some sparkling first time football from Walton that would have done justice to any professional side.

Passes were measured up to 50 yards with unerring accuracy and Wycombe were constantly stretched to keep them at bay.

Even the method of leaving Keith Searle as a lone striker in an effort to bottle up mid-field failed sadly. With full-back Roger Grant and Derek Gamblin having particularly poor matches, they were too often exposed on the flank, where Walton's own fullbacks Sargent and Edwards used the yawning gaps to telling effect.

It was Wanderers' heaviest defeat for a number of years. In their last three seasons they never had more than three goals put past them in a league match and only conceded four on three occasions in the 71/72 season. They lost 4-2 at Banbury in the Premier Midweek League, beat Met. Police 5-4 in a friendly and beat a Mike Keen's XI 6-4 in an exhibition match.

Several changes were made from Saturday's team. Back came Mick Hollifield and Tony Brothers while Derek Gamblin returned for Ian Rundle and 17-year-old Tony Price was made substitute.

The game was played at a blistering pace throughout and Wycombe survived several close shaves before Smith beat Rob Williams to a challenge for the ball. He pushed it on for Roger Connell whose low cross was deflected past young 'keeper Paul Barron for the first goal.

Barron, who came in for Dave Wright, had a most unhappy night and eight minutes later he was deceived by a deflection from a low Bassett shot and the ball spun off his arm into the net.

Wycombe's first goal attempt came from Williams, whose shot

Walton and Hershham 4, Wycombe W. 1

was well saved by Bloom. But Walton went further ahead with a fine goal in the 40th minute.

Woffinden robbed the unhappy Grant and his short pass found Morris, who swept the ball first time to the far post where Connell dived in for a superb header.

Wycombe's best break of the half came just before the interval, when Larry Pritchard, Tony Horseman and Keith Searle cut

their way into the Walton penalty area, only for Sargent to make a timely interception.

Any hopes of a Wycombe revival were shattered a minute after the interval, when the Wycombe defence allowed Woffinden to find Sargent with a short corner and his slow cross shot was again deflected into the net by Keiron Somers.

Bloom made a fine save from a fierce low drive by Searle but

Wycombe's attacks were far too spasmodic and this was not helped when Tony Price replaced Horseman in the 58th minute.

Barron turned a Somers shot on to the post but then misfortune hit him again, when he collided with Bullock and dislocated a finger. But he bravely played on after treatment.

Pritchard restored some pride to Wycombe in the 88th minute

when Searle headed down a free-kick and the Blues' striker controlled the ball in a goalmouth melee before stabbing it home.

Walton almost made it five on the final whistle when Somers beat Barron completely with a low shot which bounced off the base of a post.

WALTON: Bloom; Sargent, Lambert, Donaldson, Edwards, Bassett, Woffinden, Smith, Connell, Somers, Morris. Sub: Perkins (not used).

WYCOMBE: Barron, Gamblin, Grant, Wood, Bullock, Williams, Brothers, Pritchard, Searle, Hollifield, Horseman (sub: Price 58 mins.).



Wycombe Wanderers' substitute Graham Mackenzie is beaten to this header by a Tooting man in Saturday's 2-2 draw at Loakes Park.